



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH. & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

Indian Health Service
Rockville MD 20857

MAR 12 1993

TO Executive Staff SGM 93-1
Area Directors

FROM : Associate Director
Office of Administration and Management

SUBJECT: Correction Memorandum: Assignment of Special General
Memorandum Number - Memorandum Dated January 14, 1993 -
Eyeglasses Program for Video Display Terminal Users Who
Wear Special Application Eyeglasses

Attached is a numbered Special General Memorandum (SGM) which was .
originallly distributed January'14 , 1993, without an SGM Control
Number.

To correct this, the attached SGM has been assigned a number.
The control number for this memorandum is SGM 93-1.

SGM 93-1 provides clarification and guidance for the
implementation of SGM 91-3, Subject: Eyeglasses Program for
Video Display Terminal Users Who Wear Bifocal Lenses, which was
. previously distributed October 3, 1991.

. may be refferd to the
All questions regarding this policy
Division of Personnel Management at (301)443-7294.


George Buzzard

Attachment .



JAN 14 1993

Indian Health Service
Rockville MD 20857

S G M 9 3 - 1

T o : Headquarters Executive Staff
Area-Directors

FROM: Director

SUBJECT: Eyeglasses Program for Video Display Terminal
Users Who Wear Special Application Eyeglasses

Special General Memorandum (SGM) 91-3, dated October 3, 1991, set forth Indian Health Service (IHS) policy on an "Eyeglasses Program for Video Display Terminal Users Who Wear Bifocal Lenses." Many questions have been asked about how the policy is to be implemented and concerns have been voiced about associated procedural aspects. Also, we recognize that there may be other causes of eye strain: e.g., environmental/ergonomic conditions, that will not be alleviated by the use of special application lenses.

As a matter of IHS policy, eye strain attributed to Video Display Terminals (VDTs) will be considered potentially as serious as other types of vision safety hazards. The IHS policy for VDT eyeglasses purchase, as stated in SGM 91-3, will become part of a revised IHS VISION SAFETY POLICY in a new VISION SAFETY CIRCULAR. Circular No. 88-5 will be rewritten as a VISION SAFETY POLICY. The IHS optometry program is taking the lead role in revising, this circular. Currently, Indian Health Manual, Part 1; Chapter 9, OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAM MANAGEMENT, -is under revision and will cross-reference the IHS VISION SAFETY POLICY.

Reimbursement for the cost of special eyeglasses, as provided for in SGM 91-3, or issuance of such eyeglasses directly, shall be approved: (1) not more often than once every. 3 years; (2) only after prior consultation with local occupational safety, eye care, and employee health program staffs; and (3) only after appropriate steps have been taken by the employee and his/her supervisor to document the need for, and suitability of, the eyeglasses to be provided or obtained.

Policy Clarification

Employees who wear bifocal lenses and believe that they need special application eyeglasses to relieve eye strain associated with use of VDTs, shall follow the procedures below, if they expect IHS to reimburse them for the cost of their eyeglasses or they expect IHS to provide the eyeglasses directly.

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- A. Before any IHS employee independently obtains (or receives from IHS) special application eyeglasses to relieve eye strain caused by VDT use, he/she must obtain written certification from his/her supervisor: (1) that use of VDT equipment is a requirement of his/her official duties; (2) that the supervisor has consulted with local occupational safety, eye care, and employee health program staffs, where established, to ensure that other possible causes of eye strain have been considered; and (3) that, based on the recommendations of those staffs, special eyeglasses procurement is warranted.

This certification must accompany any request for reimbursement of costs associated with outside procurement of special application eyeglasses or request for examination, at an IHS health care facility, for such eyeglasses.

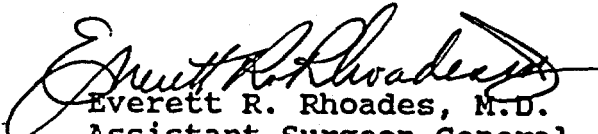
- B. Wherever available, IHS direct or contract services shall be used for examination and IHS contract services shall be used for eyeglasses procurement. Examinations, prescriptions, and special application eyeglasses for employees who complain of VDT related eye strain are to be provided directly by IHS only if certification, as required under paragraph A, is presented to the examining facility.
- c. If reimbursement for outside procurement of special application eyeglasses is desired, the employee must provide: (1) a copy of the certification required under paragraph A; (2) a copy of an eyeglass prescription, less than 1 year old, stating that the lenses are suitable for VDT use, written/signed by a qualified eye care professional; and (3) a receipt for payment of costs for the frame and special application lenses.

These documents should be provided to the employee's servicing administrative office. In IHS Headquarters, that office will follow the procedures stated on page 2 of SGM 91-3. Field employees will process their requests in accordance with procedures established by the Area or local administrative office, as appropriate. Reimbursement is limited to \$150 for frame and lenses only. Employees are responsible for arranging and paying for eye examinations obtained in the private sector. Each Area is responsible for approved costs incurred by its employees.

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In reviewing the causes of eye strain in accordance with provisions of Paragraph A, the local IHS safety subcommittee for hazard surveillance should visit the work station and consult with the local IHS eye care professional or consultant before making recommendations regarding the provision of special eyeglasses. Co-involvement of IHS optometry and occupational health program staffs is critical to ensuring responsible management of the IHS vision safety-effort.

The need to identify vision hazards deserves special attention at all IHS locations. Often, the solution to VDT eye strain may entail environmental improvement instead of, or in concert with, special eyeglasses. Therefore, requirements of Circular 88-5, VISION SAFETY GUIDELINES, related to eye hazard surveys shall be met. Such surveys are conducted as part of each facility safety committee's hazard surveillance program. Decisions to purchase new VDT work station equipment also should be reviewed by the safety committee to ensure that any potential for VDT associated eye strain problems has been evaluated.


Everett R. Rhoades, M.D.
Assistant Surgeon General